

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /039 W

-----105660 052244Z /61

R 041842Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1407

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, PGOV, PINS, BF

SUBJ: SHAKE-UP AT ZNS

REF: (A) NASSAU 821 (B) NASSAU A-21, PART 3

1. EDISON (ED) BETHEL AND PAMELA GRANGER, TWO KEY FIGURES IN THE BROADCASTING CORPORATION OF THE BAHAMAS (BCB) (REF A) FOR ALMOST TWO DECADES WERE SACKED FOR "UNSPECIFIED" REASONS EVENING JULY 31. BETHEL, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER OF THE CORPORATION IN CHARGE OF THE NEWS DEPARTMENT AND A 15 YEAR VETERAN OF THE CORPORATION, AND MRS. GRANGER, PERSONNEL OFFICER, AN EMPLOYEE FOR 22 YEARS, HAVE CONFIRMED RECEIPT OF THEIR TERMINATION NOTICES. FRED MITCHELL, AGED 27, FORMERLY HEAD OF ZNS TV'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT REPLACES BETHEL AS ACTING NEWS DIRECTOR OF THE CORPORATION.

2. PHILIP SMITH, PLP-ASSEMBLY MAN FOR NORTH END, LONG ISLAND, RUM CAY AND SAN SALVADOR CONSTITUENCY AND PRESENT CHAIRMAN OF THE BCB, AND SENATOR KENDAL NOTTAGE, UNDER WHOSE MINISTRY OF YOUTH, SPORTS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MINISTRY LIES, AT FIRST DECLINED TO ELABORATE ON THE REASONS FOR THE DISMISSALS. SMITH NOW REVEALS THAT THEY OCCURRED BECAUSE BOTH BETHEL'S AND MRS. GRANGER'S POSITIONS HAD BECOME 'REDUNDANT.' SMITH ALSO HAS CONFIRMED THAT BOTH BETHEL AND

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MRS. GRANGER ARE ON VACATION LEAVE AND THAT THEIR EMPLOYMENT WILL BE TERMINATED AT THE END OF THIS PERIOD.

3. EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE INDICATED THAT "PRINCIPAL" CAUSE FOR FIRINGS WAS PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY (PLP) GROWING DISSATISFACTION WITH IMAGE AND ALLEDGED POOR NEWS COVERAGE IT HAS BEEN RECEIVING FROM BCB. DISSATISFACTION BEGAN WHEN ED BETHEL

REPORTEDLY PROVOKED THE WRATH OF DPM A.D. HANNA AS CONSEQUENCE OF BETHEL'S NEWS COVERAGE OF HANNA'S DENUNCIATION IN PARLIAMENT OF RETIRING BDP SIR ROLAND SYMONETTE (REF B). BETHEL REPORTEDLY REFERRED TO HANNA AS "UNGENTLEMANLY" IN THE VIRULENT MANNER IN WHICH HANNA ATTACKED SIR ROLAND. P.M. LYNDEN O. PINDLING'S WRATH WAS REPORTEDLY PROVOKED IN JULY BY ALLEDGED LATE ARRIVAL BY FIVE MINUTES OF PETER "GIANT" BOWLEG AT OPENING OF PLP'S EXHIBITION AT GAMBIER HOUSE IN CELEBRATION OF THE PARTY'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY AND BOWLEG'S EARLY DEPARTURE FROM SAME EVENT ALLEDGEDLY UPON INSTRUCTIONS FROM BETHEL. FINALLY, BOTH THE PM AND DPM WERE UPSET BECAUSE OF BDB'S POOR COVERAGE OF PLP BANQUET NEAR THE END OF JULY HONORING FIVE PLP STALWARTS.

4. ON AUGUST 1, CHAIRMAN SMITH ANNOUNCED AN APPROXIMATE 10 PER CENT PAY INCREASE FOR BCB EMPLOYEES RETROACTIVE TO OCTOBER 1, 1977. CORPORATION EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FOR A RAISE FOR PAST TWO YEARS REPORTEDLY ARE FURIOUS OVER THE RAISE, WHICH MOST HAVE TERMED A PITTANCE, CLAIMING IT WAS NOT EXPECTED IN THAT THEY THOUGHT THE RAISE WOULD ELEVATE SALARY LEVELS MORE IN LINE WITH WHAT OTHER PUBLIC CORPORATIONS ARE GETTING. DISGRUNTLED STAFFERS, BITTER AT THE SIZE OF THE PAY HIKES, HAVE CALLED IT 'BLOOD MONEY' DESIGNED TO TAKE THEIR MINDS OFF THE DISMISSALS OF BETHEL AND MRS. GRANGER.

5. COMMENT: BDB AND FNM OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE LONG CHARGED THAT PLP HAS USED BCB AS PROPAGANDA WEAPON. THIS CHARGE HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INCREASED SINCE JULY 1977, WHEN ZNS-TV WENT ON THE AIR, AND WAS OPENLY USED AS MECHANISM BY THE PLP TO PROMOTE ITS IMAGE IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE GENERAL ELECTION ON JULY 19, 1977. BETHEL'S FIRING APPARENTLY RESULTED FROM HIS PORTRAYAL OF THE NEWS AS "TOO STRAIGHT" AND THUS DETRIMENTAL TO THE IMAGE OF THE PLP. BETHEL'S REPLACEMENT BY MITCHELL, A PLP YES-MAN, IMMEDIATELY CORRECTS THIS SITUATION FOR THE PLP AND PROBABLY WILL RESULT IN EVEN MORE VOCAL OPPOSITION CHARGES IN PARLIAMENT THAT THE BCB HAS BECOME A MOUTH-PIECE OF THE PLP. SCHWARTZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INFORMATION MEDIA, PERSONNEL, REMOVAL FROM OFFICE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NASSAU01663
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780321-1252
Format: TEL
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780898/aaaaddym.tel
Line Count: 104
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: aaf1356a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 NASSAU 821, 78 NASSAU A-21
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1835901
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHAKE-UP AT ZNS
TAGS: ETEL, PGOV, PINS, SOPN, BF, (BETHEL, EDISON), (GRANGER, PAMELA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/aaf1356a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014